

in that discussion. On this floor is perhaps as good a place to thrash it out as ever. If I can be convinced that a 3 percent salary increase is the reasonable thing to do, the fair thing to do, the necessary thing to do, then perhaps I would withdraw my amendment. But at this point in time I think that the bill needs to be debated. I believe that we ought to discuss it in its entirety. I think, as Senator DeCamp pointed out, many people do not know the provisions that were placed in the bill through the efforts of Senator Warner's committee and Senator Barrett's committee. We ought to know those provisions. We ought to know why they are there. We ought to know what they will do to the future of the negotiation process between the state and its employees. Then, of course, we ought to know, we ought to have those gentlemen and ladies who have participated in the process explain why they feel the 3 percent raise is in fact fair. I would have to tell you this, that I've traveled across the State of Nebraska extensively in the past six months, and I can tell you very frankly that the people in the country do not feel, they do not feel that a 3 percent salary raise is justified. I can tell you that I've talked to county boards and two city councils, to school boards, all of them are faced with the necessity of taking a good long, hard look at the budgetary process. Most of us recognize, and I was here, again, when state salaries were not satisfactory. They were miserably below that of private industry. I am proud to say that at this time, in most categories, state salaries have become comparable to those, I believe, of private industry. Now if I can be proven incorrect on that, then I would perhaps change my mind. But I can tell you that we have some decent...

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...some decent salary levels in the budget now. I do not know, and I'm not sure that anyone knows, what we can afford. I can tell you one thing, when you take a look at the proposal we have from the budget committee, \$11.5 million is a lot of money. And the shell game that we engage in, to borrow 5 million from here and shove it to some other area, is just that. It isn't a question of how much tax we pay. It is a question of who pays the tax. I can tell you that if we follow some of the suggestions we are not going to reduce the overall level of expenditure. We are just simply shifting them from one category of